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Army Corps May Ease Tree Removal Policy In California

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Photo by Joe Rubin Cap Radio

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(Sacramento, CA)
Tuesday, September 27, 2011

Representative Doris Matsui and the civilian head of the Army Corps of Engineers toured several levee strengthening projects yesterday. The Congresswoman also used the time with Jo-Ellen Darcy to lobby for the reversal of a controversial policy.

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By
Joe Rubin

Matsui supports much of the work the Corps does. But she is a fierce critic of a controversial post hurricane Katrina policy that calls for the removal of most trees and vegetation on levees.

(MATSUI) "California is much different from the mid-west. Historically we have had vegetation and trees on the levees, that was really for habitat. So we believe that tearing out trees may not be the best situation."

Darcy says the corps is listening to concerns about the policy.

(DARCY) "I think it' s fair to say that we are looking at being flexible in terms of how we would look at the policy here in California. We have been working with the state in terms of establishing a framework, which we haven't done in any other state."

The argument against the tree removal policy got a recent boost from a surprising place. A study funded by the corps found that in most instances, trees don't weaken levees and in some cases they may actually strengthen them.

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